



## Saving the Lives of Infants in Florida: The Back to Sleep Campaign

### Public Health Problem

In Florida in 1996, an unusually large number of babies were dying of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Florida PRAMS data indicated that only 25% of infants were put to sleep on their backs (28% white and 15% African American).

### Evidence That Prevention Works

For more than a decade, CDC has worked with state and local health departments and others to detect deaths and health problems among pregnant women and infants, determine the causes of these problems, and develop solutions. A critical part of this effort is CDC's state-based Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), which collects data on the health of infants and health and health-related behaviors of pregnant women and new mothers. Research indicates that putting infants to sleep on their backs or sides rather than on their stomachs can decrease their risk of dying of SIDS.

### Program Example

In response to the PRAMS data, the Northeastern Florida Healthy Start Coalition launched a "Back to Sleep" educational campaign targeting health care professionals and new parents. Students from Jacksonville University assembled packets of educational materials about placing infants on their backs to sleep. The packets were distributed to day care centers and hospitals in the region for training programs for nurses. Activities focused on parents included distributing baby T-shirts with the "Back to Sleep" logo on the back. Following this campaign, 1998 PRAMS data indicated that 56% of infants were placed on their backs in northeast Florida (64% white and 43% black) compared with 37% of infants statewide (42% white and 21% black). In addition, the SIDS death rate in the region decreased from 1.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1997 to 0.74 deaths per 1,000 in 1998.

### Implications

The Northeastern Florida Healthy Start Coalition continues to use PRAMS data to monitor infant sleeping position. The coalition is now refining its education efforts to better reach African American parents to reduce racial disparities in SIDS. By detecting health problems among mothers and babies and by sharing results from programs like these, PRAMS is helping chart the course for maternal and infant health in the United States.

### Contact Information

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